Grant amount: $1,372,250

Leveraged amount: $350,000 from MBC and Mass Bio Ed; $50,000 from state and local Workforce Investment Boards.

Grantee: Massachusetts Biotechnology Education Foundation

Key partners: Massachusetts Biotechnology Council (MBC); Massachusetts Biotechnology Education Foundation (Mass Bio Ed); Massachusetts Workforce Board Association; Commonwealth Corporation; The University of Massachusetts' and 5-campuses statewide; The Boston Private Industry Council (Boston PIC);The Metro Northwest Regional Employment Board; The Metro Southwest Regional Employment Board; and Boston University School of Medicine's City Lab.

Grant activities will take place in the Greater Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville, Mass.

Challenge

A chronic and growing shortage of qualified biotechnology workers stems from a lack of high school preparation and solid knowledge base in the life sciences. As a result, biotechnology companies cannot find enough qualified workers for excellent opportunities. The industry has designed multi-faceted strategies to expose and attract youth to biotechnology careers and to encourage the appropriate high school preparation in order to support successful technical skill training at the post-secondary level.

Addressing the Challenge

With its $1,372,250 grant, the BioCareer Lab initiative will launch BioCareer Labs in 25 urban and high-needs public schools (as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act). The labs will include new equipment, ongoing teacher training, a mobile biotech laboratory, access to curricula developed with National Science Foundation funds, and school-to-career pathways in partnership with workforce investment boards and colleges. Mass Bio Ed will lead the effort to identify and test an industry-defined standard of quality for facilities, teaching and learning of biotechnology in high schools. The overall goal of the project is to spark interest in the life sciences at the high school level.

Projected Outcomes

- Teach 2,000 students and 100 science teachers and provide ongoing teacher training;
- Identify and refine industry standards for facilities, teaching, and learning; and
- Outfit more than 150 Massachusetts schools with new science lab equipment and supplies.